

ABOUT MUSIC

– By Mariss McTucker

Don Beans: *Opus 13* Recorded, mixed and produced by Marco Forcone at Rene- gade Ridge Studios, White- fish, MT, 2014.

Long-time Bigfork acupuncturist Don Beans is embracing a new career. Or rather, rekindling one of his passions of youth, that of making music. Growing up in Great Falls, Beans tried out lots of instruments, and went on to study music composition at The University of Montana for a short while. He’s also written musical scores, starting as a teen.

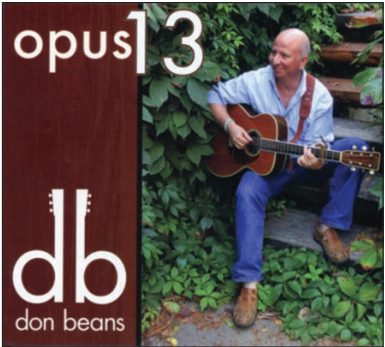
The singer/songwriter has a collection of original songs out, and the recording is spare, with just Beans on guitars, bass and vocals, and producer Forcone kickin’ ass on drums and percussion. Beans sings in a light country vein with an adept baritone-to-tenor vocal range. His story-songs are mementos of his life, and cover various country styles.

“Hook, Line and Sinker” is a toe-tappin’ jitterbugger, while “Beacon in the Night” has a moody, spooky feel.

“Rise In Love” is a pretty ballad, in which Beans sings harmony as well as lead. “I’m Given’ Up,” co-written with Bob Marsenich, is a man’s swan song to his love. It has a snappy melody that contradicts its prophetic words: “We fought the good fight, we fought the long fight, I’m given’ up because my body’s giving out.”

“Hippie, Shuffle, Swing” is an amusing look back at “freedom dancing,” that loose and ungainly antithesis of organized dance that all of us youngsters practiced in the old days, and some still do. “How did it get started?” Beans sings, “It was really organic, we saw the kids at Woodstock, we didn’t panic ... So let us dance, with reckless abandon ... ” What a crack-up!

There’s lots more here, and good production to boot. Visit Beans at www.donbeans.com



David Morgenroth: *Verdant*

Recorded by Andy Waterman at Umbrella Media, Chatsworth, CA; additional tracks recorded by Gil Stober, Peak Recording, Bozeman, MT; arranged and produced by David Morgenroth, 2014.

Missoula’s piano king David Morgenroth has released a new album, which follows his last effort, *Alone with Duke*. Recorded in L.A.

after he worked on another project there, *Verdant* features a few of his originals and some old favorites.

Morgenroth enjoyed the relaxed energy of SoCal’s pros so much he decided to record with major jazz players Bob Sheppard, soprano and tenor saxophones, Chris Colangelo, bass, and Joe La Barbera, drums.

In true Morgenroth fashion, the work is loose and tight at the same time, due to the top-drawer musicianship and synergy among the players.

“Barbara” starts us off. Morgenroth wrote it for his wife; it features a lush and snappy melody with soprano sax gliding effortlessly overtop Morgenroth’s subtle accompaniment. He follows with fleet-fingered magic of his own, while bass and drums percolate underneath.

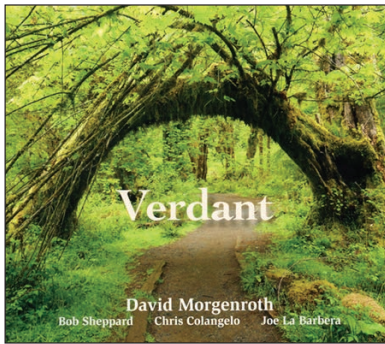
His syncopated and swift “Counterplot” comes next, tenor sax warbling at the get-go. Before long, Morgenroth takes his break, fingers flitting down the keys like a hummingbird hovering.

The pianist’s Brazilian-flavored “¡Macanudo!” (“cool” in Chilean) storms in with a terrific unison lead by piano and sax. Bruno Martino’s “Estate” is sweet and hushed, the drums hypnotizing; the bass gets to wiggle and snap mid-stream, too. Wonderful!

The title tune wraps up the album. It’s layered, rich, and mesmerizing, sax burbling and honking like a fluttering bird as Morgenroth’s chords build, taking flight.

All the pieces are relatively lengthy, allowing the instrumentalists to extend themselves. In every number they time it perfectly to come together and intertwine riffs using some sort of jazz ESP. That’s teamwork, folks.

The album is opulent and emotive. Is anyone surprised? Visit the artist at www.davidmorgenroth.com.



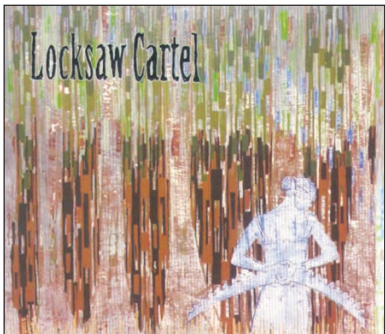
Locksaw Cartel

Recorded, engineered, and produced by Richard McIntosh in Missoula, MT, at The University of Montana, the Locksaw Cartel studio, Club Schmed Studios, and McIntosh’s Idiyuts World Studio, 2014.

This talented Missoula five-piece has released a doozy of a first album, all original numbers. The members are co-songwriters Ruth Dada, vocals, and Chris DuParri, guitar, lap steel and vocals; Ben Schuberg, keys/synthesizers, trumpet, and flute; Tal Slaughter, fretless bass; and Matt Mischke, vocals, drums/percussion, and vocals.

They’ve all performed around the Missoula music scene for the last decade in one band or another, and got together in 2012 to meld influences that include Billie Holiday, Miles Davis, Bonobo, Nirvana, Portishead, and many more. Their “danceable funk” comprises genres like R&B, rock, jazz, classical, and oldies, too.

“Breeze” has an effervescent bass and a raucous, syncopated drum beat.



Nashville musician pays tribute to Ben Bullington on new CD

Americana Singer/Songwriter Darrell Scott’s 11th CD, *10 – Songs of Ben Bullington*, pays tribute to Montana doctor/songwriter Ben Bullington who died of pancreatic cancer in 2013. The two songwriters met in Montana and forged a friendship and mutual admiration society.

Scott is a masterful performer, featured as a member of Robert Plant’s Band of Joy, and on albums with Guy Clark, Steve Earle, Sam Bush, Joan Baez, and Allison Moorer, among others. He’s also an in-demand producer.

Bullington released five CDs of original songs, with only one that was co-written – Little Feat’s Bill Payne collaborated on “The Last Adios.” Even though his touring was limited by his full-time medical practice, Bullington was joined on recordings by friends Rodney Crowell, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Tracy Nelson, Payne, Will Kimbrough, and a slew of other top musicians. His musical impact was strengthened with performances at the Kerrville Folk Festival, the 30A Songwriter Festival, Jammin’ at Hippie Jacks, and performances all over the country.

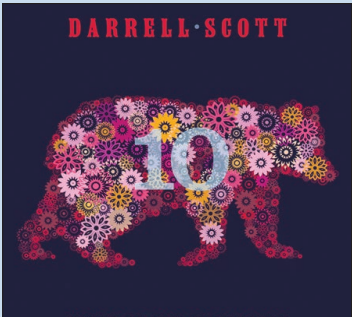
Of the new recording, Crowell says Scott has “captured beautifully with guitar, piano and soulful voice, the very album Ben dreamed of ... The stillness and unhurried revelation that is the hallmark of Ben Bullington’s best songwriting, thanks to Darrell Scott, is alive and well.”

Carpenter adds, “To hear one great songwriter inhabit another’s work is a breathtaking experience, and it makes me happy to imagine that Ben’s gifts will live on through Darrell’s interpretations.”

Finally, collaborator Payne says the collection of songs “is built on a structure of simple eloquence and honesty ... Performed with conviction and an open heart, Darrell has captured the essence of Ben’s writing, his truths and doubts and dreams not yet realized. It is story telling at its finest ... ”

After a concert with Darrell Scott and Friends at the City Winery in Nashville on release day, May 19, the second show takes place June 5 at the historic Ellen Theatre in Bozeman, near Bullington’s adopted town of Livingston. Guests include Scott, Bill Payne, John Lowell, Tom Murphy, Kris Clone, and Joanne Gardner.

For more information, go to www.darrellscott.com.



Dada enters with her sweet voice, reminiscent of Natalie Merchant but way more powerful. She sings the lyric in bit of a Jamaican accent while the synth emanates bell-like sounds.

“Goblins” is spooky with a creeping bass line. Dada and DuParri share unison lead and dissonant duet harmony, with the lyrics streaming out. Presently, studio magic introduces gremlins jabbering over the percolating instrumental.

Sweet piano chords and a soft, magnetizing rhythm underlie Dada’s vocal on “Little Heart”; and “Sneaky Little Sister” is a rocker with an ominous motif. The down-and-dirty guitar riffs and crisp drums steamroll it throughout; then comes the duet a cappella vocal by Dada and DuParri, a bit frightening: “hounds they’re barking, law with guns held high, sneaky little sister don’t you let me die ... ” That’s followed by a quiet Miles Davis-esque instrumental interlude that fades out. Now that’s ambience!

“Opus” is 54 seconds of rapid-fire piano arpeggios that fade to a music-box riff, then straightaway, the piece segues into “Solution.” Seamless.

Terrific musicianship and production make this album cook. Visit www.locksawcartel.com.

Idaho Green: *Do the Nelz*

Recorded at Titan Recording, Sherman Oaks, CA, Kildare Studios, Chicago, IL, the Porterhouse, Huntley, MT, and at the Brown Brother’s Butchery, Nashville, TN, by Tyson Kreiter, Joe Gac, Kelly La Croix, and Guthrie Brown, respectively; produced by Idaho Green, 2014.

The Huntley/Billings crew of young garage-punk (spud punk?) musicians, none of whom is from Idaho, has released a cassette of five songs, full of high-energy dance music that has nuances of ‘50s and ‘60s soul/garage and newer punk.

Huh? A cassette? Austin Finn, songwriter/guitarist and the band’s main vocalist, explains that Idaho Green’s California record label likes cassettes, and that there’s a wave of people going back to them for recording. The album is also available for download from the band’s website.

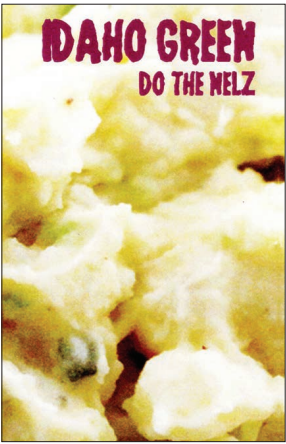
Finn also notes that singing about Idaho keeps the band from getting too serious. His band-mates include brother Jordan Finn, who seriously wallops the drums; Caleb Addy on guitar and vocals; Phil Griffin on bass; and Dan Redinger on trombone and other instruments.

“Do the Nelz” was written for an unflappable middle-school teacher and drummer in punk bands who would never be caught dancing. It’s playful, loud and fun, with trombone blasts here and there. “Dee Dee Stoner (My Dad Has Tools in His Truck)” is a great jitterbugger. It’s got a skewed Ventures Fender guitar sound and a simple chord structure.

The corny, up-tempo “Coeur d’Lame” is full of minor chords, killer drums, and retro woah-h-hs. The Finn/Addy “Knight of 100 Hamms” has chatter overlaying a steady drumbeat, screaming and wailing vocals, and chunky guitar.

“Cowgirl Blues,” featuring guest singer Guthrie Brown, is bluesy and pretty, with doo-dos in harmony and a sprightly piano riff. Then a solo by what, a fly caught inside wax paper?

These kids have cooked something up – I dunno what – but I like it. Visit idahogreen.bandcamp.com.



State of the Arts welcomes CDs

State of the Arts welcomes CD submissions by Montana musicians for inclusion in the About Music section. The recordings must be professional, commercially available, full-length CDs, with cover art and liner notes. Brief biographical information on band members would be helpful to the writer.

Please send submissions to either the Montana Arts Council, PO Box 202201, Helena, MT, 59620; or *Lively Times*, 33651 Eagle Pass Trl., Charlo, MT 59824.